

Libraries Transformation Programme

APPENDIX 4

**Proposed Changes to East Sussex Libraries'
Opening Hours**

Rationale and Draft Impact Assessment

Summary

This report explains the rationale for a proposal to change the opening hours of the 24 libraries in East Sussex, and summarises the findings of an initial assessment to evaluate its impact on the public. Over the next three years East Sussex County Council needs to save between £70 and £90 million. The proposal is one of a number of potential measures we have identified that could save £2million from the running costs of our libraries and contribute towards the County Council's overall savings plan.

Our libraries are not well used at all times of the day. We are proposing to reduce the overall amount of time that all of our library buildings are open to the public. The opening hours proposals focus on reducing library opening hours at quieter times, whilst ensuring that people have access to services across the county when they are most used. It is proposed that libraries will only be open between the hours of 10.00am and 5.00pm, except for those libraries that are currently open later than 5.30pm.

However it is important to highlight that whilst the focus of the proposal is to save money by reducing library opening hours at times when libraries are least well used, we cannot make all the savings we need to make by only reducing opening hours before 10.00am and after 5.00pm. By making some further changes to opening hours, it would be possible to retain a comprehensive service across the county. All libraries would continue to be open during the day at varying times throughout the week.

For those libraries open later than 5.30pm it is proposed that these libraries would retain one evening opening until 6.00pm on a Thursday evening. Thursday is the busiest evening for our libraries in terms of visitors, transactions such as loans and renewals of items, and use of library computers. Thursday is also the day when most libraries are open later, and it tends to coincide with late night opening for shopping. We also think that having the same day each week makes it easier to remember when it is evening opening for libraries.

Overall the proposal would result in an average reduction to opening hours of our 24 libraries by around 25% across East Sussex and would save us around £500,000 per year.

Public libraries are a statutory service and councils have a legal duty to provide them. By law we must ensure that the service we provide is "comprehensive and efficient", and if we make any changes to our library service, we must ensure that it remains so. The purpose of undertaking an assessment of the impact of the changes we are proposing is to ensure that our library service would continue to be comprehensive and efficient and meet the needs of our residents and those who work or attend full time education in East Sussex. The law does not say how many libraries East Sussex has to have, or when they should be open. It also does not require our libraries to provide services to every person in the county at all times of the day, but that libraries should be accessible to everyone, using reasonable means. Our duty to provide an efficient library service means that we must make best use of the resources available to us, recognising any constraints which the County Council is facing.

We have analysed in detail all of the data we hold about the delivery of library services and commissioned new surveys of our customers. We have considered carefully whether the opening hours proposals would enable us to continue to provide a comprehensive service that is accessible to all our residents and those who work or attend full time education in East Sussex by reasonable means and we have formed the initial view that it would.

On average, over 85% of visits to libraries, use of library computers and wifi, and loans, renewals and returns of items take place between 10.00am – 5.00pm. The changes we are proposing will enable people to continue to use their library at varied times throughout the week from Monday to Saturday within the core hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm. In addition for

those libraries that are currently open later than 5.30pm, people would also be able to continue to use these on one evening per week. Most library users are retired, unemployed or work part time, and 94% of customers do not use the library every day.

We anticipate that most library users are therefore likely to have the flexibility to visit libraries on varying days and at different times throughout the week, as services at all libraries would continue to be accessible at other times of the week. This draft impact assessment concludes that the needs of the public that are met by using the library would still be fulfilled if we implemented the proposals and reduced opening hours by around 25% on average.

There will, of course, be impacts on some residents, potentially including those people who are in full time employment or at school and whose opportunity to visit the library during the core hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm on weekdays is less than it is for people who are not in full time work or education. However, most libraries are open at lunchtimes and it is proposed that all twelve libraries that are currently open on at least one evening per week after 5.30pm, will retain one evening opening until 6.00pm. We are not proposing to close any libraries on Saturdays, when they can be accessed by people in full time work and education. We know from the data that we hold that our libraries are not well used during current evening opening, which suggests that there is a low level of demand for in-library services outside of core hours.

Our e-library is also available 24 hours a day and is available to all library users. Members and non-members can browse the library catalogue via the website and registered library members can access the full range of online services 24hrs per day, including e-books and e-audiobooks and a range of free online reference materials. Enquiries can also be made and answered online or by telephone, and renewals are available online or by phone 24 hours a day. We therefore believe that the impact on these groups is small and that there is adequate mitigation in place to address the impact.

We have considered what alternatives there are to reducing library opening hours, but have concluded that we cannot not make sufficient savings from the other areas of our overall £2m savings plan. We also considered whether it would be better to propose closing some of our libraries and keeping the others open for longer. We are developing a long-term, strategic view of what needs our library service should meet over the next five to ten years, called a Strategic Commissioning Strategy. This is a detailed piece of work that needs to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and not pre-judged. For that reason it will take us around 18 months to complete. Only once this review is complete will we know what the future service could look like and how services should be delivered to best meet need. There are no plans to close libraries during the development of our long term Strategy for the service.

We believe that the proposals are proportionate and fair, both in the contribution that they will make to the overall savings the County Council needs to make, and in the way that we propose to reduce opening hours at each library across the county. We think the proposals will enable us to continue to provide an efficient library service and make it more efficient in future.

This draft impact assessment is based on a detailed analysis of the data we hold about how people use our library services and what they have told us about their library usage from new surveys that we have commissioned of our customers. We will be undertaking further surveys and undertaking more data analysis of library usage, particularly in the evenings, before it is finalised. We will also consult with the public on the proposals, to ensure that we have properly understood and taken into account their impact. The feedback from the public consultation and the further data we are gathering will enable us to finalise the impact assessment prior to taking any decision on library opening hours.

1. Introduction

Over the next three years East Sussex County Council needs to save between £70 million and £90million. Finding further savings from the services we deliver is getting harder and it will not be possible for us to find this level of savings without cutting some services and delivering other services differently in future.

We have identified that we could save £2million from the running costs of our libraries and contribute towards the County Council's overall savings plan. We will implement a Transformation Programme that will consist of an initial, internal review of the service, to ensure that we are running it in the most efficient way possible. We recognise that what people need from a library service is changing, and will continue to do so. Over the past five years there has been an 87% rise in use of the e-library and a 568% increase in the download of e-books, compared to an 11% decrease in physical visits and a 20% reduction in stock issues. These figures reflect a national trend towards increased use of digital services. Despite these changes, there were still 1.98 million visits to East Sussex libraries in 2014/15, and we have 211,000 members.

In parallel to the internal review of the service, we will therefore also develop a Strategic Commissioning Strategy, which will provide us with a broad, long-term, strategic view of what will or might be required for our library service in the future.

The development of the draft Strategy will be guided by priority outcomes that will be agreed upon early in the process. By focussing on outcomes, not the existing service, it will enable us to make the best possible use of resources, and develop a modern and sustainable library service.

2. The Proposals

A detailed analysis of current library usage in East Sussex shows that our libraries are not well used at all times of the day. We are proposing to reduce the overall amount of time that all of our library buildings are open to the public. The opening hours proposals focus on reducing library opening hours at quieter times, whilst ensuring that people have access to services across the county when they are most used. It is proposed that libraries would only be open between the hours of 10.00am and 5.00pm, except for those libraries that are currently open later than 5.30pm. These libraries would retain one late night opening until 6.00pm on a Thursday evening.

Overall the proposal would result in an average reduction to opening hours of around 25% across East Sussex and would save us around £500,000 per year. Whilst the focus of the proposal is to save money by reducing library opening hours at times when libraries are least well used, we cannot make all the savings we need to make by only reducing opening hours before 10.00am and after 5.00pm. By making some further changes to opening hours, it would be possible to retain a comprehensive service across the county. All libraries would continue to be open during the day at varying times throughout the week. The current and proposed opening hours for each library are shown in Table 1 below.

East Sussex County Council is not the first local authority to do this. Authorities that had broadly similar opening hours to East Sussex libraries have reduced opening hours by approximately 10-25% in recent years in response to usage patterns and as part of wider cost savings activities. For example, Devon County Council reduced its opening hours by 17% and Cornwall by 24%.

Table 1: Current and Proposed Opening Hours for East Sussex Libraries

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Current hours per week	Proposed hours per week	% reduction
Battle - current	closed	09:30- 18:30	09:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 17:00	40		
Battle - proposed	closed	10:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 13:00	11:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		30	25
Reduction	0.00	-3.00	-4.50	0.00	-2.00	-0.50			
Bexhill - current	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 18:30	10:00 - 17:00	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 17:00	45		
Bexhill - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 16:00	13:30 - 17:00	11:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		33.5	26
Reduction	-0.50	-3.00	-3.50	-2.00	-2.00	-0.50			
Crowborough - current	9:30 - 17:30	10:00 - 17:30	9:30 - 17:30	9:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 16:00	49		
Crowborough - proposed	12:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 14:00	11:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		36.5	26
Reduction	-3.50	-0.50	-4.00	-2.50	-2.50	+0.50			
Eastbourne - current	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 18:30	10:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 17:00	51.5		
Eastbourne - proposed	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		39	24
Reduction	-2.00	-2.00	-6.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.50			
Forest Row - current	14:00 - 17:00	closed	10:00 - 13:00	14:00 - 17:00	14:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	15		
Forest Row - proposed	closed	closed	10:00 - 13:00	14:00 - 17:00	14:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00		12	20
Reduction	-3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
Hailsham - current	14:00 - 17:00	10:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	42.5		
Hailsham - proposed	12:00 - 17:00	12:00 - 17:00	closed	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		32	25
Reduction	+2.00	-3.50	-7.50	+0.50	-1.50	-0.50			
Hampden Park - current	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 17:00 *	closed	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 16:00	32.5		
Hampden Park - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	14:00 - 17:00	closed	12:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		24.5	25
Reduction	-3.50	-3.50	0.00	-2.00	+0.50	0.50			
Hastings - current	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 18:30	10:30 - 18:30	9:30 - 17:00	45.5		
Hastings - proposed	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		39	14
Reduction	-1.50	-2.00	-0.50	-1.00	-1.00	-0.50			

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Current hours per week	Proposed hours per week	% reduction
Heathfield - current	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 17:00	closed	9:30 - 19:00	10.30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	30.5		
Heathfield - proposed	closed	10:00 - 17:00	closed	11:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 13:00		23	25
Reduction	-3.50	-0.50	0.00	-2.50	-0.50	-0.50			
Hollington - current	9:30 - 17:30 *	9:30 - 17:30 *	closed	9:30 - 17:30 *	09:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 16:00 *	30		
Hollington - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 16:00	closed	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 13:00		22	27
Reduction	-4.00	-1.00	0.00	0.00	-0.50	-2.50			
Langney - current	closed	9:30 - 17:00	closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 14:00	9:30 - 17:00	27		
Langney - proposed	closed	10:00 - 17:00	closed	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 13:00		20	26
Reduction	0.00	-0.50	0.00	-0.50	-1.50	-4.50			
Lewes - current	9:30 - 19:00	10:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	44		
Lewes - proposed	10:00 - 14:00	10:00 - 17:00	closed	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		33	25
Reduction	-5.50	+0.50	-3.50	-1.50	-0.50	-0.50			
Mayfield - current	11:00 - 13:00	14:30 - 18:00	closed	14:30 - 18:00	closed	10:00 - 13:00	12		
Mayfield - proposed	closed	13:30 - 17:00	closed	13:30 - 18:00	closed	10:00 - 13:00		11	8
Reduction	-2.00	0.00	0.00	+1.00	0.00	0.00			
Newhaven - current	9:30 - 16:30	9:30 - 16:30	closed	9:30 - 16:30	9:30 - 16:30	9:30 - 16:30	35		
Newhaven - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 16:30	closed	10:00 - 16:30	13:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 16:30		26	26
Reduction	-4.00	-0.50	0.00	-0.50	-3.50	-0.50			
Ore - current	closed	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 17:00 *	closed	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 17:00 *	26		
Ore - proposed	closed	12:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00 *	closed	10:00 - 17:00 *	10:00 - 13:00		19.5	25
Reduction	0.00	-2.00	-0.50	0.00	-0.50	-3.50			
Peacehaven - current	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 19:00	10:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 16:30	37.5		
Peacehaven - proposed	closed	10:00 - 15:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 16:00		28	25
Reduction	-3.50	-2.50	-0.50	-1.50	-0.50	-1.00			
Pevensey Bay - current	closed	10:00 - 17:30 **	closed	10:00 - 17:30 **	10:00 - 17:30 **	10:00 - 12:00	20		
Pevensey Bay - proposed	closed	14:00 - 17:00	closed	10:00 - 16:00 **	10:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 13:00		15	25
Reduction	0.00	-3.00	0.00	-1.50	-1.50	+1.00			

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Current hours per week	Proposed hours per week	% reduction
Polegate - current	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:30 *	closed	9:30 - 13:00	9:30 - 17:00 *	9:30 - 16:00	30		
Polegate - proposed	12:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00 *	closed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 17:00 *		22.5	25
Reduction	-2.00	-1.00	0.00	-0.50	-3.50	-0.50			
Ringmer - current	closed	15:00 - 18:00	9:00 - 12:00	13:30 - 16:30	closed	closed	9		
Ringmer - proposed	closed	13:30 - 17:00	closed	13:30 - 18:00	closed	closed		8	11
Reduction	0.00	+0.50	-3.00	+1.50	0.00	0.00			
Rye - current	09:00 - 17:30	9:00 - 17:30	10:00 - 17:30	9:00 - 17:30	9:00 - 17:30	9:00 - 17:00	49.5		
Rye - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 16:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00		37	25
Reduction	-4.50	-1.50	-1.50	-1.50	-1.50	-1.00			
Seaford - current	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	09:30 - 17:00	45		
Seaford - proposed	14:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 16:30		33.5	26
Reduction	-4.50	-0.50	-4.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00			
Uckfield - current	9:30 - 13:00	09:30 - 17:30	9:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 17:30	10:00 - 19:00	9:30 - 16:00	44.5		
Uckfield - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	10:00 - 16:30	14:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 18:00	10:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 16:30		33	26
Reduction	-0.50	-1.50	-7.00	0.00	-2.50	0.00			
Wadhurst - current	14:00 - 16:30	closed	10:00 - 12:30	14:00 - 16:30	14:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 12:30	12.5		
Wadhurst - proposed	14:00 - 16:30	closed	10:00 - 13:00	closed	14:00 - 16:30	10:00 - 13:00		11	12
Reduction	0.00	0.00	0.50	-2.50	0.00	+0.50			
Willingdon - current	9:30 - 17:00 ***	closed	9:30 - 17:00 ***	9:30 - 17:00 ***	9:30 - 17:00 ***	9.30 - 12.30	25		
Willingdon - proposed	10:00 - 13:00	closed	10:00 - 17:00 ***	14:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00 ***	10:00 - 13:00		19	24
Reduction	-2.50	0.00	-0.50	-2.50	-0.50	0.00			

* Closed for lunch between 13:00 & 14:00

** Closed between 12:30 & 14:00

*** Closed between 12:00 & 14:00

3. Impact Assessment

When deciding what changes to make to public libraries, the County Council is legally obliged to abide by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This law means that public libraries are a statutory service and councils have a legal duty to provide them. We must ensure that the service we provide is “comprehensive and efficient”, and if we make any changes to our library service, we must ensure that it remains so.

The purpose of undertaking an assessment of the impact of the changes we are proposing is to ensure that our library service would continue to be comprehensive and efficient and meet the needs of our residents. The law does not say how many libraries East Sussex has to have, or when they should be open. It also does not require our libraries to provide services to every person in the county at all times of the day, but that libraries should be accessible to everyone using reasonable means. Our duty to provide an efficient library service means that we must make best use of the resources available to us, including any constraints which the County Council is facing.

A detailed analysis has been undertaken for a sample of months between December 2014 and August 2015 of current library usage across the 24 libraries in East Sussex. The analysis included a statistically significant survey which has been developed to enable the County Council to assess the need of current library users. It has provided us with information about the services that different people use in all of our libraries, as well as how often they use them and when they visit. This helps us understand the impact of the proposed changes to opening hours, and will also form part of the separate needs assessment relating to the development of the long-term Strategic Commissioning Strategy for libraries. We have also analysed data from the library management system to understand what services are used and when.

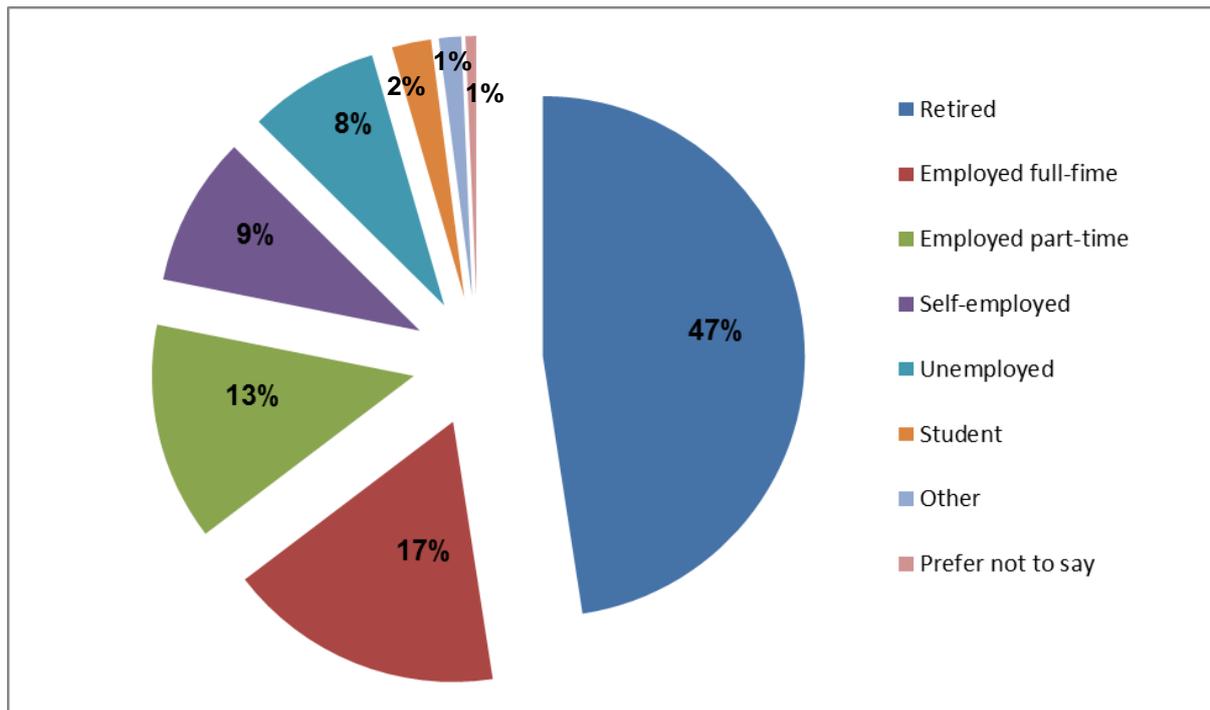
In addition to library user surveys and analysing the data we hold, we are undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the proposals to change library opening hours. The findings of the draft EqIA have helped us understand what impact, if any, these proposals would have on equalities, and this is summarised later in this report.

Who uses our libraries?

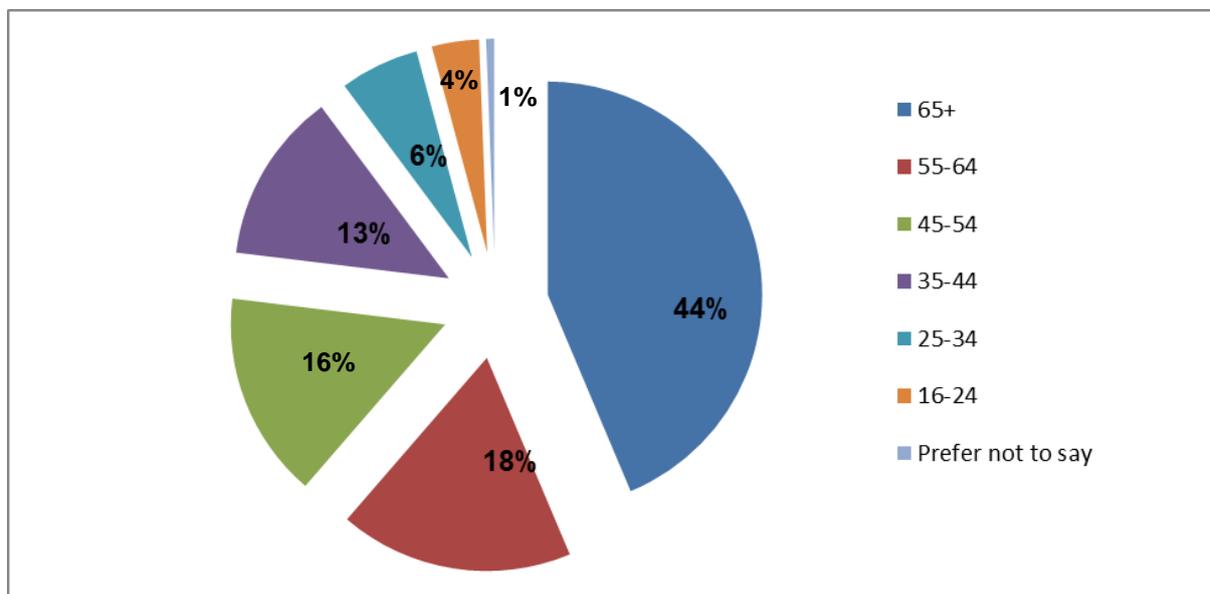
In June 2015 (during term time) we carried out a survey of 1,836 current library users aged 16 and above at all libraries across East Sussex. This survey was repeated in August/September and will take place again in December. The results from these surveys will be included within the updated rationale and draft impact assessment that will be considered by Cabinet in July 2016. Graph 1 below shows who the users of East Sussex libraries are. Almost half of library users were retired people and in total 71% of users were people who were either retired, worked part time, were unemployed or were students, and who were therefore able to use libraries at different times of the day. Of this 71% of users, 2.5% were students. 17% of respondents worked full time.

As would be expected with a large proportion of retired customers, 44% of library users were aged over 65, with over 60% of those surveyed aged 55 or above. Thirty-five per cent of library users were aged between 25 and 55, and only 3.5% of those surveyed were under 25 years of age.

Graph 1: Employment status of East Sussex library users



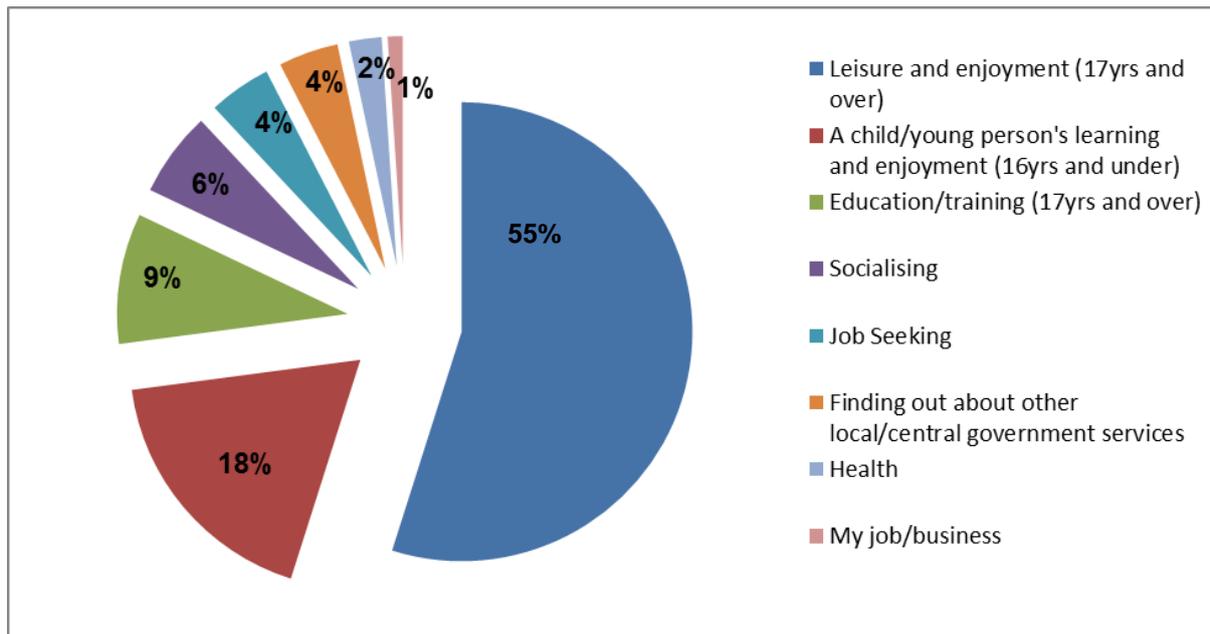
Graph 2: Age of East Sussex library users (16+)



Why do people use our libraries and what services do they use when they visit?

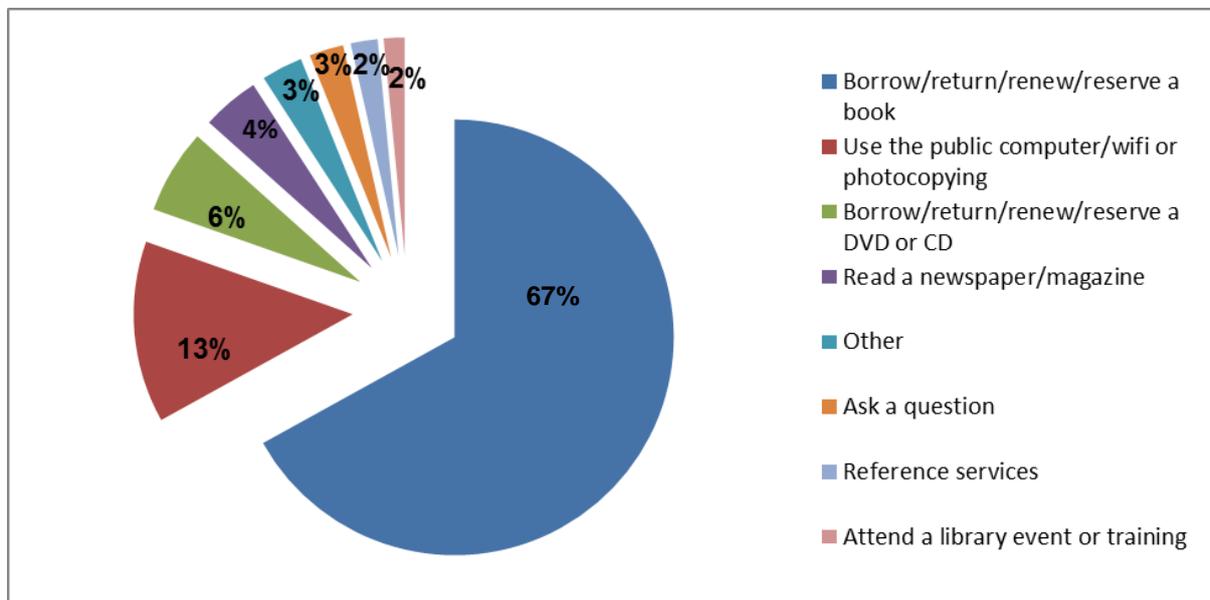
Two thirds of people visited the library for pleasure, including visits aimed at providing leisure and enjoyment for children. A further 6% visited the library for socialising. Only 13% of visitors were using the library to help with job seeking or in connection with adult education and training. Graph 3 shows all of the reasons people visited the library.

Graph 3: Will your visit today help with any of the following?



In terms of the services used in the library, 67% of customers were visiting the library to borrow, return, renew or reserve a book. The next most common reason for using the library was to access the library computers or the library wifi. A small proportion of users (6% or fewer) used the library to borrow, return, renew or reserve a DVD or CD, to read a newspaper or magazine, or to use reference materials.

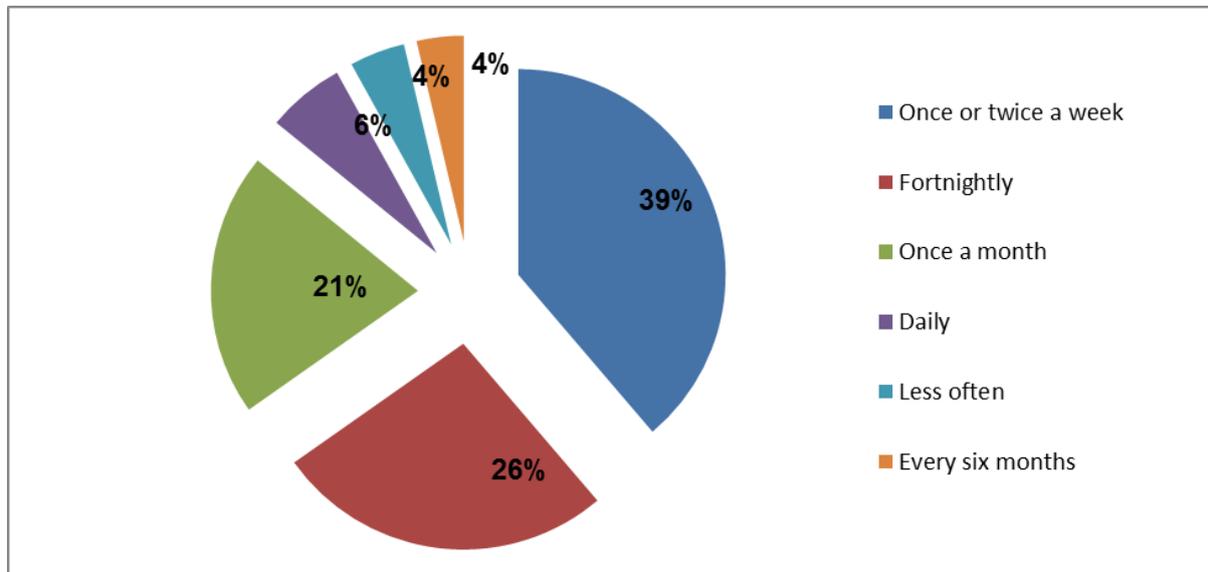
Graph 4: What services are you planning to use today at the library?



How often do people visit our libraries?

Most people surveyed visited their library at least once a fortnight, with the highest frequency of visits being once or twice a week. Around one fifth of people visited the library once a month. Only 6% of users said they visited the library every day.

Graph 5: How often do you visit this library?



What times of the day do people visit our libraries?

We analysed the data from our people counters to see the times of day that people visit a sample of our libraries. We used the people counters at Crowborough, Eastbourne, Newhaven, Seaford, Ore and Rye libraries for this analysis, as they have thermal imaging cameras which are accurate and can give us hourly visitor counts. This is also a sample which is representative of the different sizes and locations of libraries that we have.

Analysis was undertaken for each weekday and Saturday (our libraries are closed on Sundays) for a number of four week periods in December 2014, May 2015 and August 2015 for:

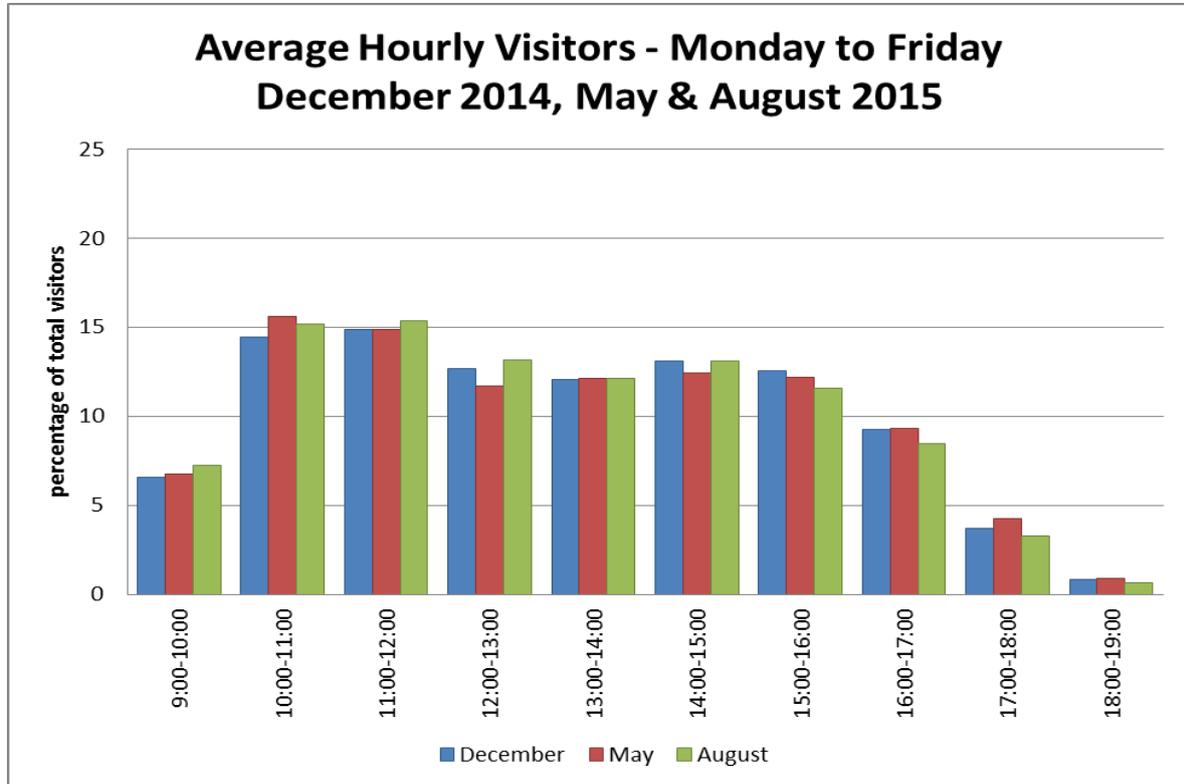
- Early morning library use before 10.00am
- 10.00am to 5.00pm (core hours)
- Late afternoon and evening use after 5.00pm

These three months were selected to give an overview of library usage at differing times of the year, including December, our quietest month, and August, which is normally our busiest month of the year. By analysing and comparing data for library usage across these three months, we were able to compare patterns of library usage in school term time as well as during school holidays.

The vast majority of library visits (88%) took place in the core hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm on a weekday. Between 6-7% of visits took place before 10.00am. More than twice the number of people visit the library between 10.00am to 11.00am than between 9.00am and 10.00 am on a weekday. On Saturdays 95% more visits took place between 10.00am and

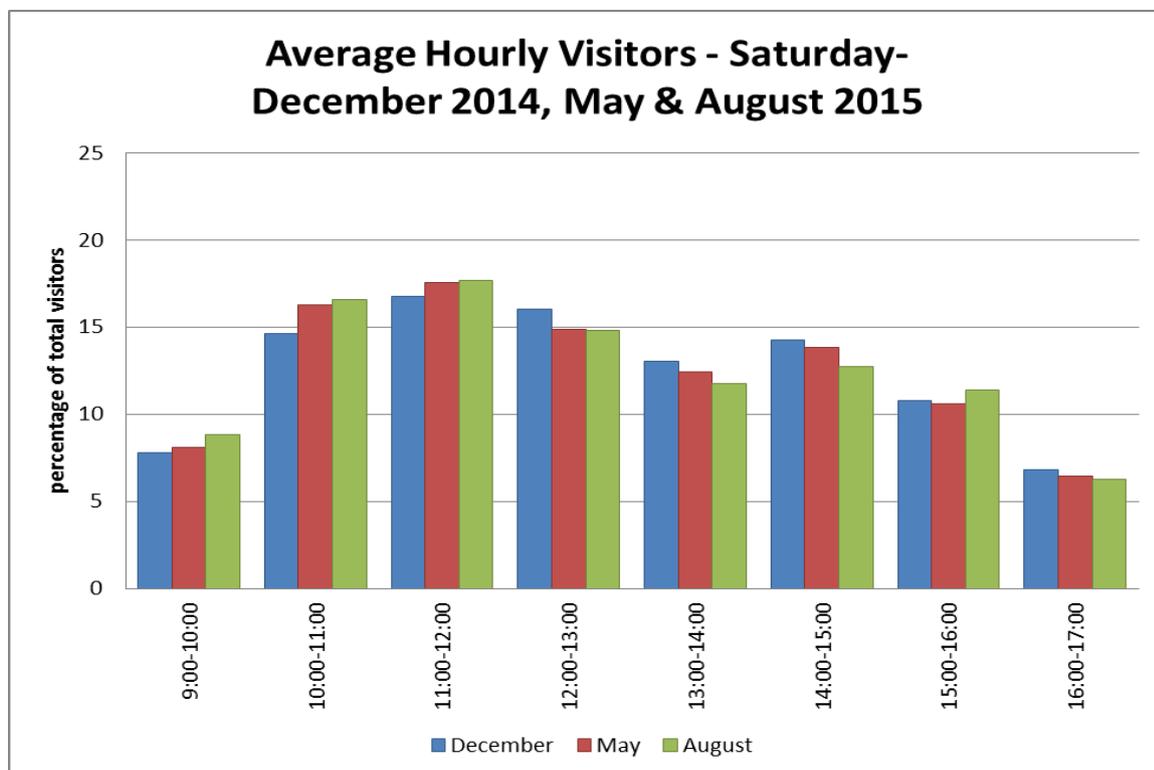
11.00 am than between 09.00 and 10.00am. In terms of evening opening, only 3-5% of visits were after 5.00pm. The results were similar across the three months.

Graph 6: Average hourly visitors on week days (Monday to Friday) December 2014, May & August 2015 - Analysis based on those libraries with thermal imaging cameras only



On Saturdays 91-92% of visits took place between 10.00am and 5.00pm. 7-9% of visits took place before 10.00am. Libraries close no later than 5.00pm on Saturdays. Graph 7 shows the hourly breakdown of visits on Saturdays.

Graph 7: Average hourly visitors on Saturdays (December 2014, May & August 2015) -
Analysis based on those libraries with thermal imaging cameras only



What services are used at different times of day?

The impact assessment has analysed the times of the day (Monday-Friday and Saturday) when libraries are used for the key services they provide, including:

- Issuing and renewal of books and other items, including use of the self-service machines
- Use of the library computers (this is known as the People’s Network)
- Use of wifi within libraries

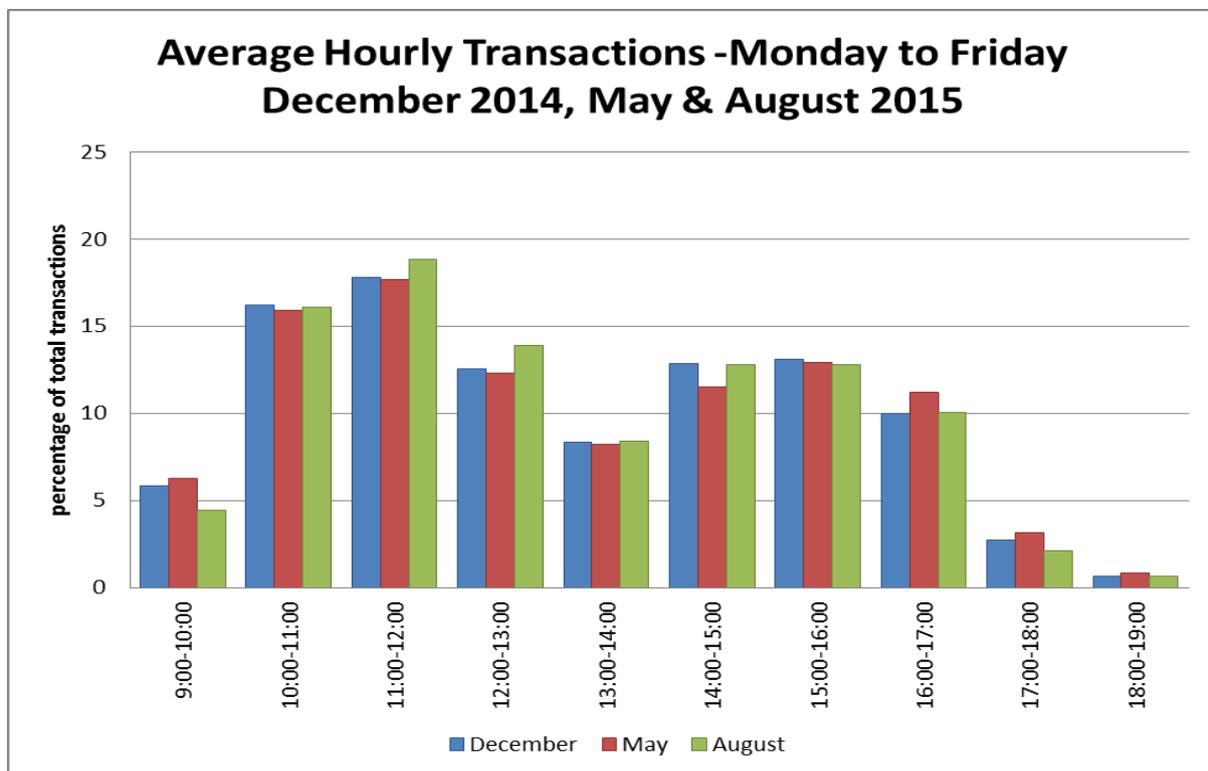
As with the analysis above for the times when people visit our libraries, this analysis was also undertaken for each weekday and Saturday for the same four week periods in December 2014, May 2015 and August 2015, and was again broken down by early morning library use before 10.00am, 10.00am to 5.00pm (core hours), and late afternoon and evening use after 5.00pm.

Issuing and renewal of books and other items

This analysis looked at the times of day when libraries are most used for the issuing and renewal of books and other items, including the use of self-service machines. We analysed the data from all of our libraries for this period. The results in graph 8 show that between 90% and 93% of all weekday transactions of this kind take place between 10.00am and 5.00pm. This pattern was consistent over all three months.

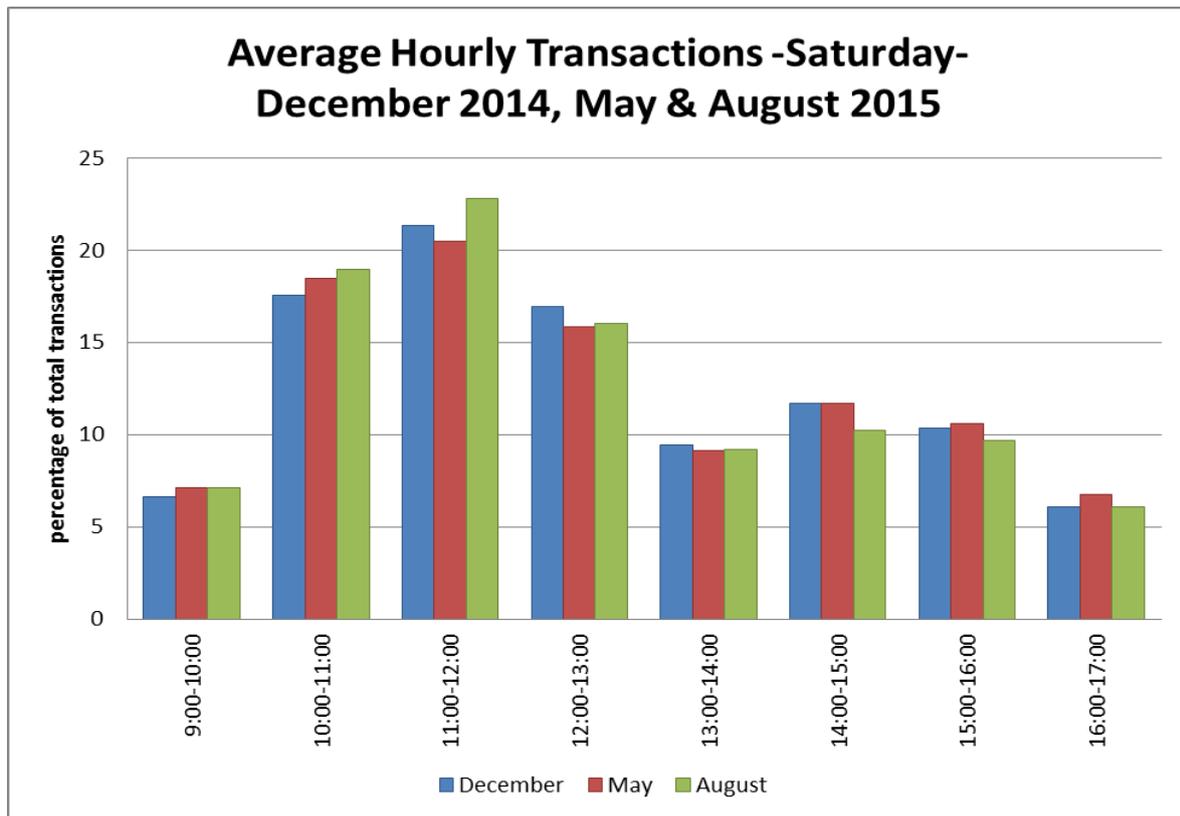
Only around 5% of issues and renewals are made before 10.00am and between 2% and 4% of them take place after 5.00pm. We would expect issues and renewals to be low before 10am as our libraries do not open until at least 9.30am. However, many libraries have opening hours until 6.00pm, 6.30pm or even 7.00pm and issues and renewals are comparatively low after 5.00pm.

Graph 8: Average hourly countywide transactions (issues, renewals and self-service issues) on week days (Monday to Friday)



Graph 9 (below) shows that on Saturdays a higher percentage of issues and renewals take place between 10.00am and 5.00pm (92-93%) than on weekdays. Again, this was very consistent across the three months. Between 6% and 7% of issues and renewals were made before 10.00am on Saturdays, slightly higher than on weekdays. There is no analysis of transactions after 5pm on Saturdays because none of our libraries open after 5.00pm.

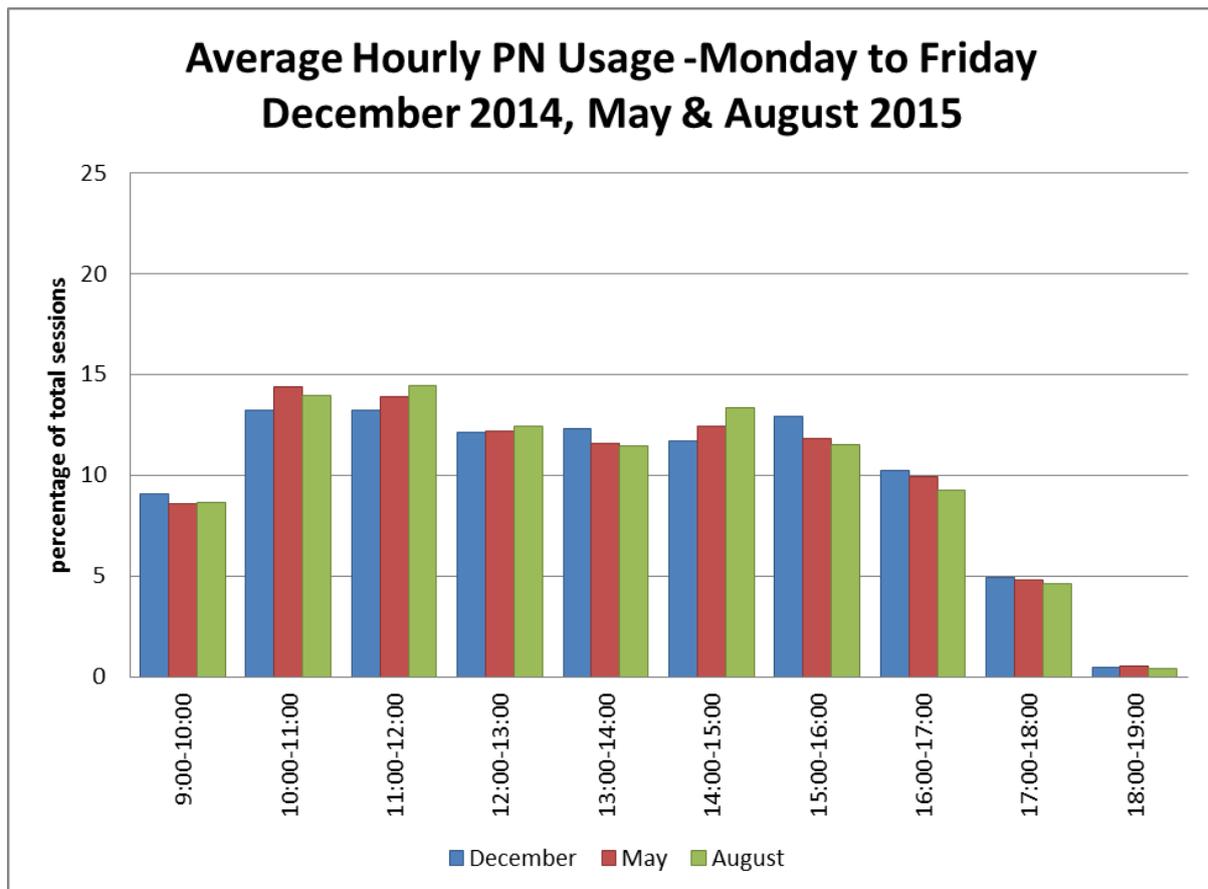
Graph 9: Average hourly countywide transactions (issues, renewals and self-service issues) on Saturdays



Use of library computers (the People's Network)

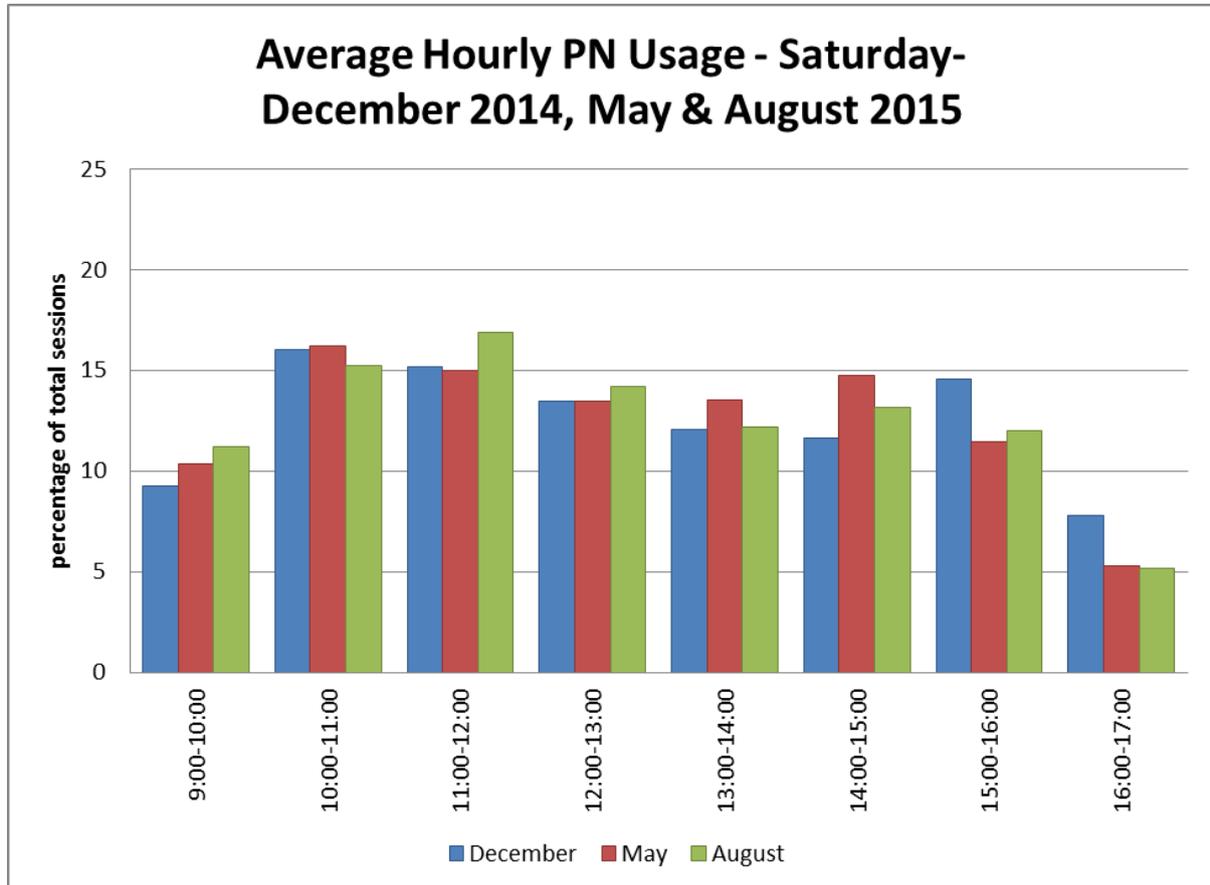
This analysis looked at the times of day when our People's Network library computers are most used. These are the desktop computers in our libraries that the public can log onto. We analysed the data from all of our libraries over the three months. The results in graph 10 show that between 85% and 86% of all weekday People's Network sessions were between 10.00am and 5.00pm. This pattern was highly consistent over the three months. Only 8-9% of People's Network sessions were before 10.00am and around 5% of them take place after 5.00pm.

Graph 10: Average hourly countywide People's Network sessions on week days (Monday to Friday)



On Saturdays, between 89% and 91% of library computer use takes place between 10.00am and 5.00pm. Between 9% and 11% of People’s Network sessions were before 10.00am on Saturdays. This was highest in August (11%) and lowest in December (9%). There is no analysis of People’s Network sessions after 5pm on Saturdays because none of our libraries open after 5.00pm. The hourly breakdown of results can be seen in graph 11 below.

Graph 11: Average hourly countywide People’s Network sessions on Saturdays

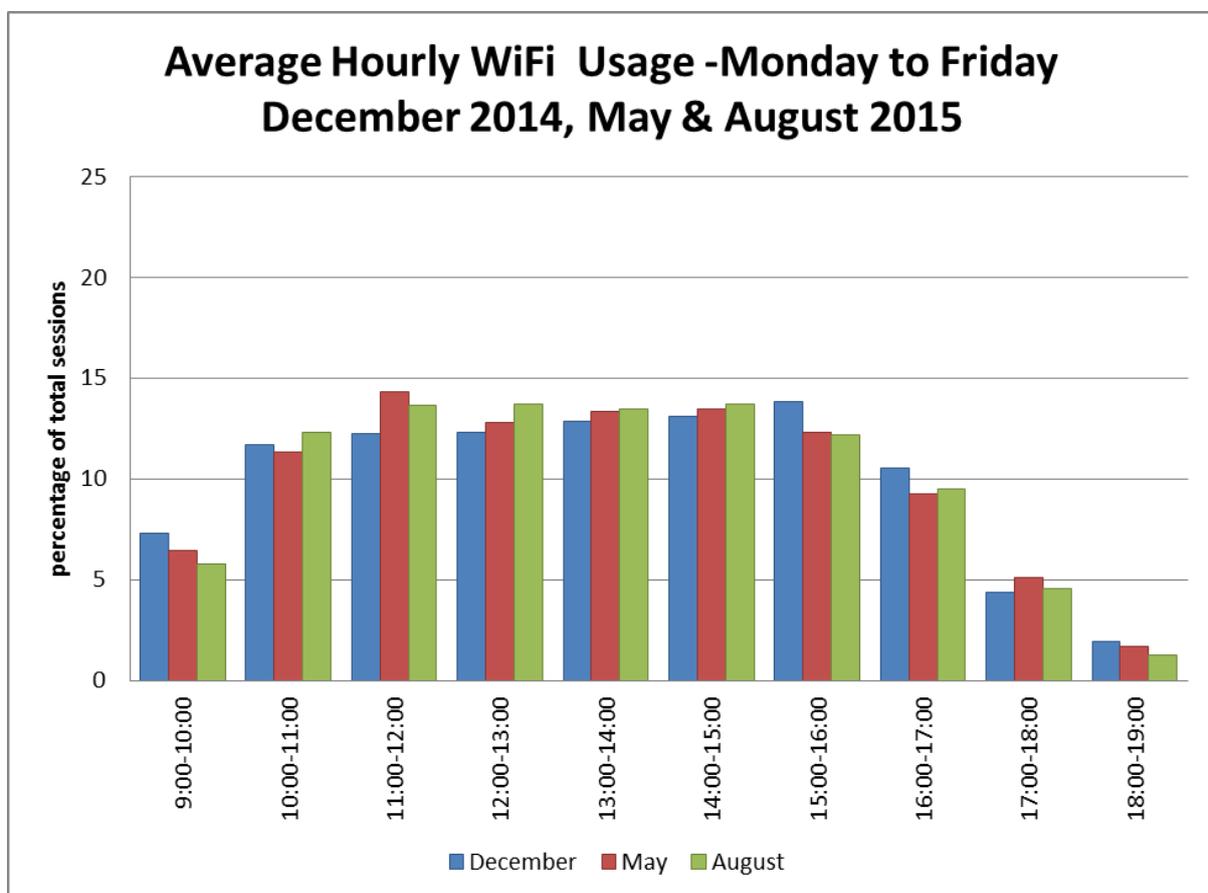


Use of library wifi

We have looked at patterns of wifi usage in our libraries during the week and on Saturdays at the libraries that had wifi provision during the months in question. These were Bexhill, Lewes, Eastbourne, Newhaven, Seaford, Hailsham, Peacehaven and Rye libraries. However, during the remainder of 2015 and early 2016 we will be rolling out wifi to all of the remainder of our libraries.

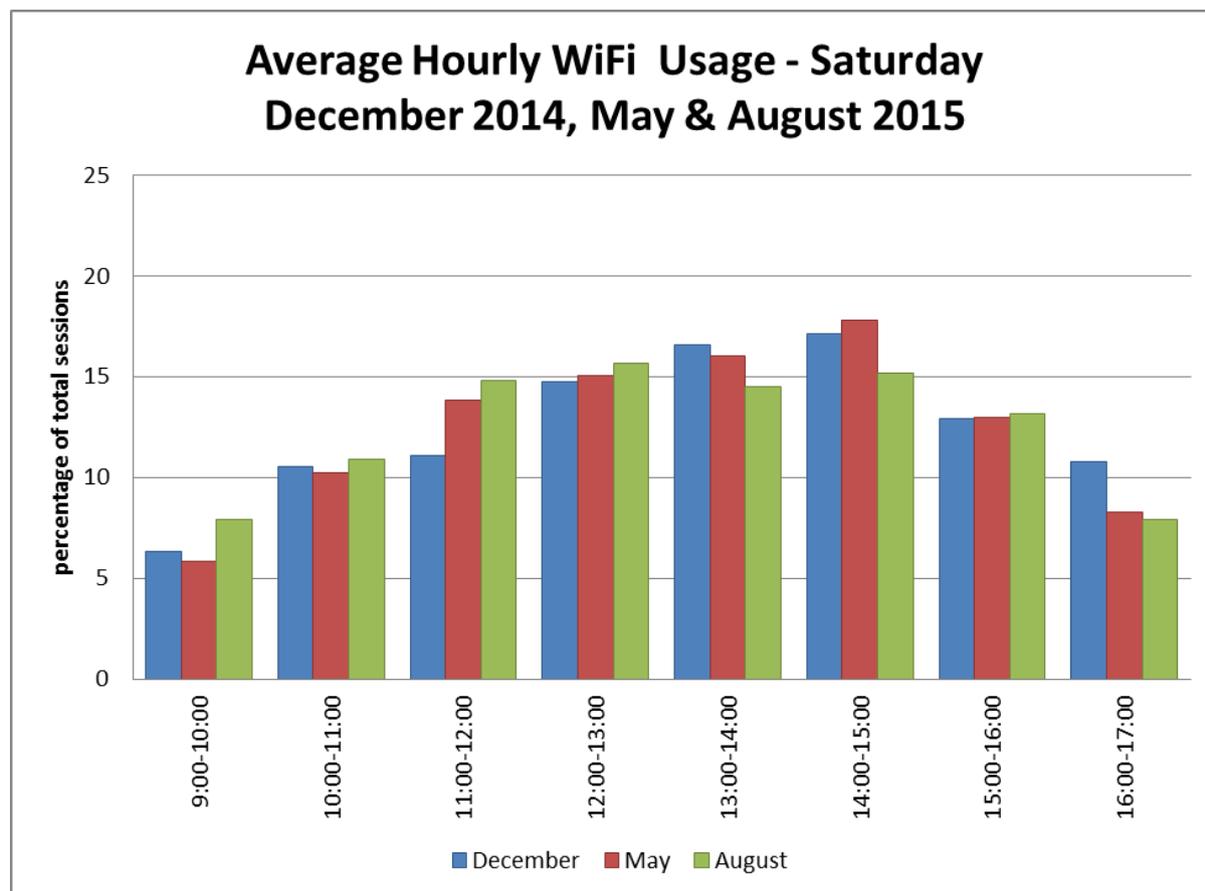
The results show that between 86% and 88% of all weekday wifi sessions were between 10.00am and 5.00pm across the four week period. Between 5% and 7% of wifi sessions were before 10.00am and 5-7% of them took place after 5.00pm. Graph 12 shows the hourly breakdown of usage.

Graph 12: Average hourly wifi sessions on weekdays (Monday to Friday)



On Saturdays the results were similar to the patterns of usage for other library services, in that proportionately more wifi sessions took place in the core period of the day. This is to be expected as libraries close no later than 5pm on Saturdays. The results show that 92-94% of Saturday wifi sessions were between 10:00 and 5:00pm. There were between 6–8% of wifi sessions before 10:00am. Graph 13 shows the hourly breakdown of wifi usage on Saturdays.

Graph 13: Average hourly countywide wifi sessions on Saturdays



Analysis of evening library usage

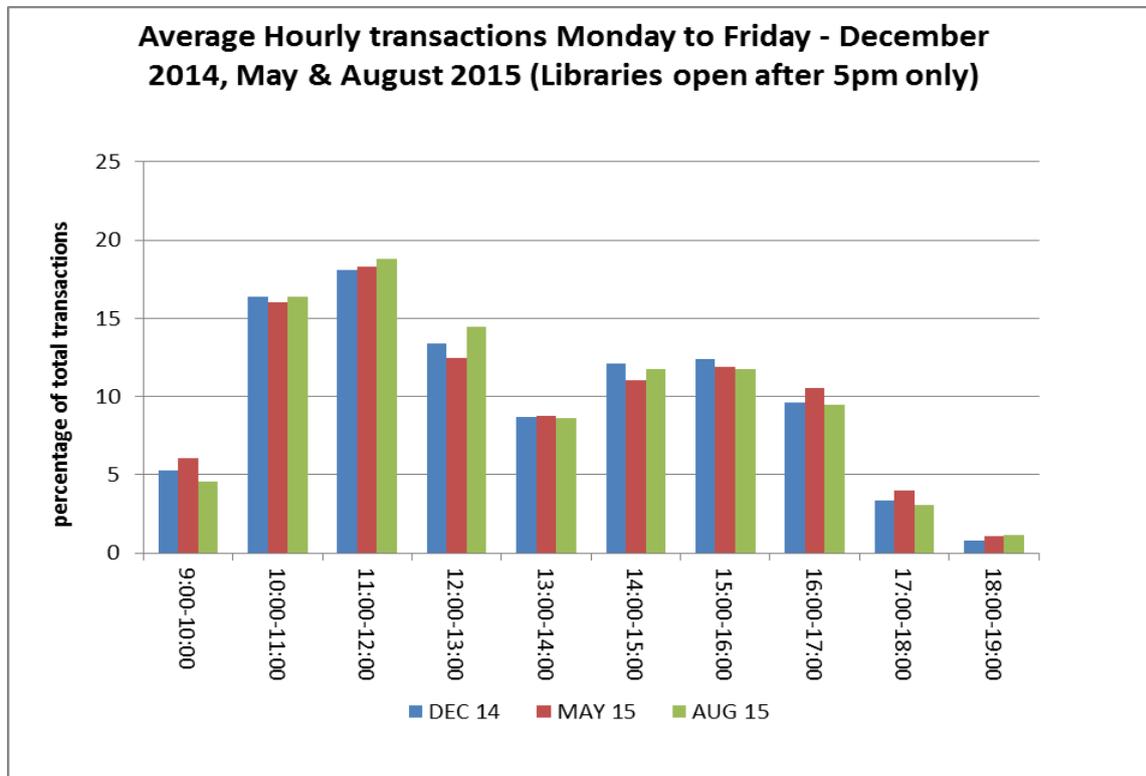
Because not all of our libraries open after 5.00pm, we have undertaken some separate analysis of the patterns of hourly library usage in the 16 libraries that open after 5.00pm, to compare them with patterns of usage in all libraries.

Four libraries are open until 5.30pm on at least one evening per week (Hollington, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Rye) and a further 12 libraries are open after 5.30pm on at least one evening per week (Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Hastings, Heathfield, Lewes, Mayfield, Peacehaven, Ringmer, Uckfield). As before, this analysis has focussed on data from December 2014, and May and August 2015.

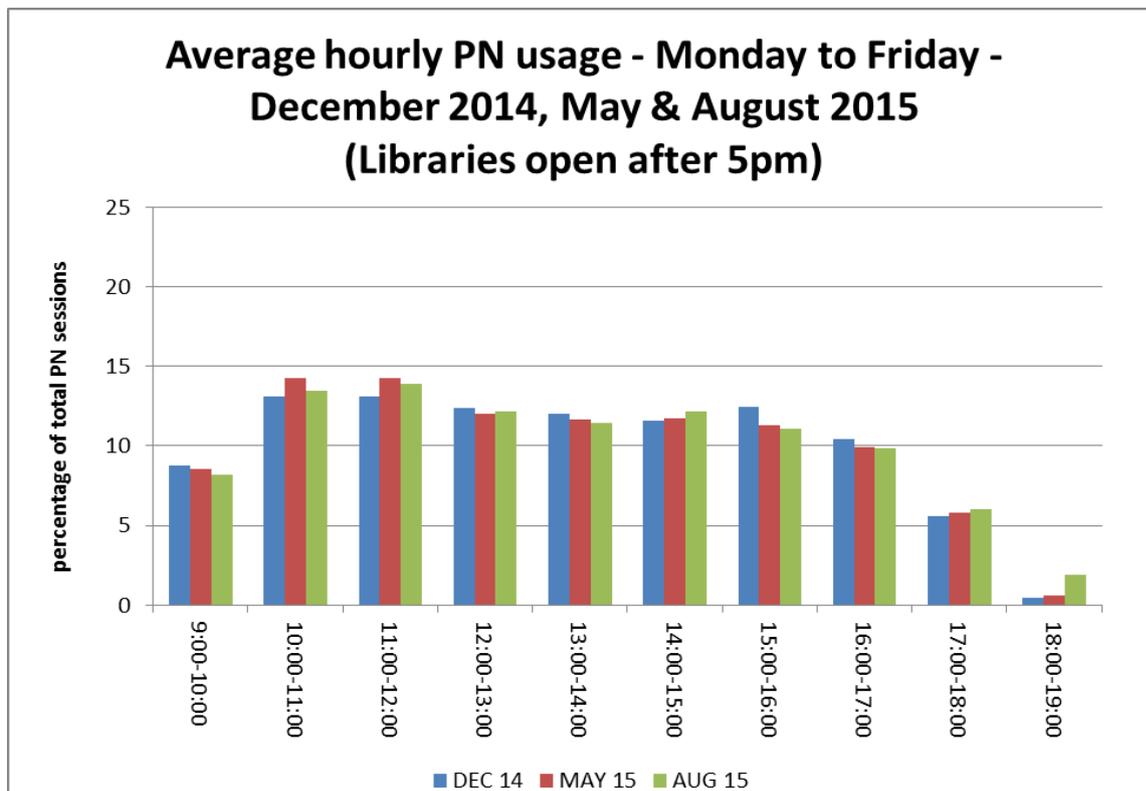
The results of this analysis show that only 4-5% of daily transactions in these libraries are carried out after 5.00pm. Similarly, 6-8% of People’s Network computer sessions and 6-7% of wifi usage were recorded after 5.00pm. The results of this analysis are shown in the following three graphs (graphs 14, 15 and 16). These graphs also show that there are very

similar patterns of hourly library usage throughout the day in libraries that have evening opening hours compared with usage patterns in all libraries as shown in graphs 8-13.

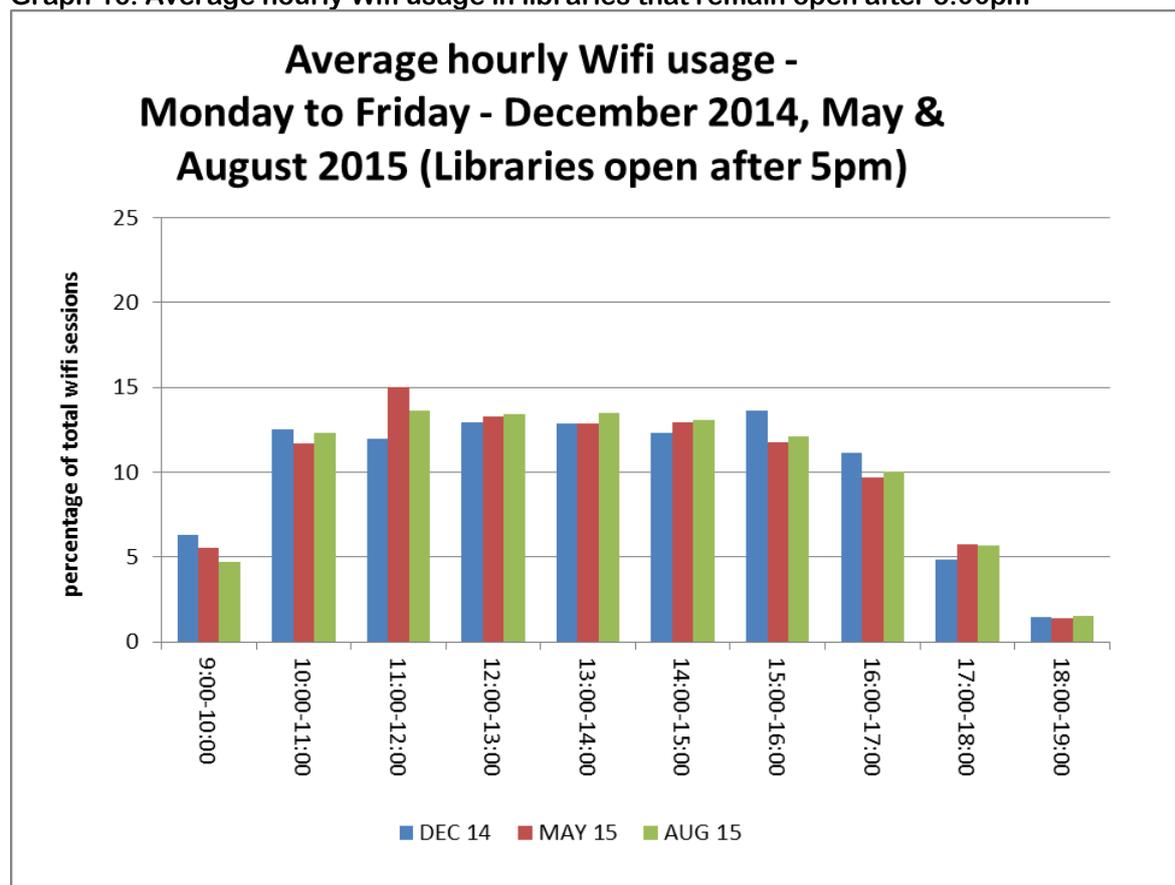
Graph 14: Average hourly transactions in libraries that remain open after 5.00pm



Graph 15: Average hourly PN sessions in libraries that remain open after 5.00pm



Graph 16: Average hourly Wifi usage in libraries that remain open after 5.00pm



The analysis of evening library usage has also looked at who uses our libraries after 5.00pm. In particular we looked at the hour between 4.00pm and 5.00pm in order to understand how many children were using the library after school. At present this analysis has only been undertaken for use of the People’s Network computers and the results are shown in Table 2. Similar, further detailed analysis is being undertaken of transactions during evening opening. The results of this analysis will be used to inform the final rationale and impact assessment.

Table 2 shows that between 95% and 97% of customers using the People’s Network computers after 5.00pm are adult members (16 years and over) and only 3-5% are child members (under the age of 16). The data does not show large differences in the numbers of children using the library computers after 4.00pm. In fact, more children used the computers after 5.00pm in August (during the school holidays) than in either May or December. Total People’s Network usage for both adults and children more than halved in the hour after 5.00pm compared with the hour before 5.00pm. After 6.00pm usage decreased by a further three quarters. Overall, People’s Network usage dropped by almost 90% after 5pm compared with the period 4.00pm to 5.00pm.

Table 2 Hourly use of the People’s Network (PN) computers in libraries with evening opening

		16:00-17:00 sessions	17:00-18:00 sessions	18:00-19:00 sessions
December 2014 PN monthly usage	total child	167	36	4
	total adult	1592	784	60
	total usage	1759	820	64
May 2015 PN monthly usage	total child	168	30	1
	total adult	1667	862	89
	total usage	1835	892	90
August 2015 PN monthly usage	total child	133	43	2
	total adult	1757	903	81
	total usage	1890	946	83

Surveying is being undertaken in all our libraries that are open after 5.00pm to provide further data on the age profile of customers that currently visit libraries after 5.00pm and the services they are using. The results of these surveys will inform the final impact assessment.

Summary of Equality Impact Assessment of the Proposals

In addition to our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service, the Council must have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Protected characteristics are defined in the Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. East Sussex County Council also considers carers and part-time workers as additional groups and literacy and numeracy skills and rurality as factors when carrying out analysis.

To comply with the duty, the Council must have “due regard” to the three equality aims set out above. This means the PSED must be considered as a factor to consider alongside other relevant factors such as budgetary, economic and practical factors.

We are using an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to determine the impact of the proposed changes to library opening hours on equalities. At present, this is a draft EqIA on draft proposals, which are subject to amendments following public consultation and approval by the County Council’s Cabinet.

The draft EqIA has carefully considered the practical impact of the proposed changes to opening hours, taking into account all of the relevant evidence that we have on who uses our

libraries, and how and why they are used, so that we can properly understand what the changes would mean to people.

The draft EqIA found that, at this stage, we are confident that we have taken reasonable steps to ensure that those groups with protected characteristics have been considered among existing library users. The public consultation will inform the final EqIA. The draft EqIA has identified that although a high percentage of older people are library users and therefore have the potential to be impacted upon by the changes, the impact on this group is in fact likely to be low, as most of these residents are retired and are likely to have the flexibility to visit libraries on varying days and at different times throughout the week, as all libraries would continue to be accessible at other times of the week.

The EqIA has also highlighted that the proposed reduced opening hours have the potential to have an impact on those people with certain disabilities, who as a result of those disabilities have to rely on a personal helper who may not be available within the proposed new opening hours. It has also been recognised that there is potential for people with certain disabilities who require transport to the library and cannot access that transport within the proposed reduced hours to be impacted upon by the proposed changes. In addition the EqIA has also highlighted that school age children and people who work full time may also be disproportionately impacted.

We know from the data that we hold that our libraries are not well used during current evening opening, which suggests that there is a low level of demand for in-library services outside of core hours. We are not proposing to close any libraries on Saturdays, when they can be accessed by people in full time work and education. In addition, 78% of all the library opening hours that we provide between 4.00pm and 5.00pm across the county would be unaffected by the proposals, and all 12 libraries that are currently open on at least one evening per week after 5.30pm will continue to be open until 6.00pm on one day per week. Our e-library is also available 24 hours a day and is available to all library users.

The draft EqIA will be updated following the results of the public consultation.

Other options we have considered

This section of the draft impact assessment details the alternatives that the Council has considered, both in terms of measures that might be proposed instead of reducing library opening hours, and in terms of the different ways that we considered we should implement the proposed reduction in opening hours.

In addition to our duty to provide a comprehensive library service, we also have a duty to provide an efficient service. Our £2million savings plan has considered a range of measures to deliver savings. These include changes to our staffing levels and staffing structures, ways in which we could become more efficient in spending money on library stock, and the potential for savings through a Strategic Commissioning Strategy, which will provide us with a broad, long-term, strategic view of what will or might be required for our library service in the future. We believe that the balance in making savings between these different parts of the library services is right.

We aim to staff the library service in the most efficient way, with operations as lean as possible as part of our plans. We need to run libraries safely and efficiently, both for customers and staff. Saving more money on staffing, over and above what we have currently planned as part of the £2m savings is unlikely to be possible. In terms of library stock, we need to ensure that money we spend on books and other material is money well spent. We constantly review our spending on library stock, in line with customer need. We

will compare our spending on stock with other similar libraries and with our neighbouring authorities, to ensure that we are being efficient.

We have considered whether it would be better to propose closing some of our libraries and keeping the others open for longer. A fundamental part of the development of the Strategic Commissioning Strategy is to undertake a detailed assessment of need for the service as a whole. This will provide us with a broad, long-term, strategic view of what will or might be required for our library service over perhaps the next five to ten years. The Commissioning Strategy is a detailed piece of work that needs to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and not pre-judged. For that reason it will take us around 18 months to complete. Only once this review is complete will we know what the future service could look like and how services should be delivered to best meet need. There are no plans to close libraries during the development of our long term Strategy for the service.

Conclusions of the draft impact assessment

Over the past five years, use of the e-library and downloading of e-books has grown tremendously, whilst the number of people visiting our libraries and the stock that we issue has decreased. This reflects a national trend towards increased use of digital services. Despite these changes, there were still 1.98 million visits to East Sussex libraries in 2014/15, and we have 211,000 library members.

Most visitors to our libraries still use the library for the traditional purpose of borrowing, returning, renewing or reserving a book. Access to library computers and library wifi is also an important reason for people to visit. Much smaller proportions of users visit the library to borrow CDs and DVDs, to read newspapers and magazines, or to use reference materials.

The results of customer surveys in June 2015 show that two thirds of people visited our libraries for pleasure, including visits aimed at providing leisure and enjoyment for children. A further 6% visited the library for socialising. Only 13% of visitors were using the library to help with job seeking or in connection with adult education and training.

Almost half of library users were retired people and in total 71% of users were either retired, worked part time, were unemployed, or were students. Only 17% of respondents work full time.

Most people surveyed visited their library at least once a fortnight, with the highest frequency of visits being once or twice a week. Around one fifth of people visited the library once a month. Only 6% of users said they visited the library every day.

We have considered carefully whether the opening hours proposals would enable us to continue to provide a comprehensive service that is accessible to all our residents by reasonable means. Based on the information above, we have formed the initial view that it would.

With most library users being retired, unemployed or working part time, and the fact that 94% of customers do not use the library every day, most library users are likely to have the flexibility to visit libraries on varying days and at different times throughout the week. On average, over 85% of visits to libraries, use of library computers and wifi, and loans, renewals and returns of items take place between 10.00am – 5.00pm. The changes we are proposing will enable people to continue to use their library at varied times throughout the week from Monday to Saturday, both within the core hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm and during evening opening on one day per week at those libraries that are currently open after 5.30pm. This draft assessment concludes that the needs of the public that are met by using the

library are still likely to be fulfilled if we implemented the proposals and reduced opening hours by around 25% on average.

In addition to our duty to provide a comprehensive library service, we also have a duty to provide an efficient service. The changes we are proposing to make enable the County Council to save money by not opening libraries when they are least used, which also means that the impact on customers will be minimised. The proposals have been developed by analysing up-to-date data collected from our data management system on library usage and the results of recent customer surveys.

We have ensured that the groups of people with protected characteristics have been considered among existing library users through the draft Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) that we undertook to form part of this assessment. The draft EqIA has identified that, of those groups of people with protected characteristics, although older people form a significant proportion of visitors to libraries, the impacts on this group are likely to be low, as most of these residents are retired and are likely to have the flexibility to visit libraries on varying days and at different times throughout the week.

The EqIA has highlighted that the proposed reduced opening hours have the potential to have a disproportionate impact on those people with certain disabilities who as a result of those disabilities have to rely on a personal helper who is not available within the proposed new opening hours. It has also been recognised that there is potential for people with certain disabilities who require transport to the library and cannot access that transport within the proposed reduced hours to be impacted upon by the proposed changes. School age children and those who work full time may also be disproportionately impacted.

We know from the data that we hold that our libraries are not well used during current evening opening, which suggests that there is a low level of demand for in-library services outside of core hours. We are not proposing to close any libraries on Saturdays, when they can be accessed by people in full time work and education. Our e-library is also available 24 hours a day and is available to all library users.

Computer training and advice is provided in libraries by staff and volunteers who are able to explain to visitors how to access the e-library using the People's Network computers in libraries and using their own devices. Computer advice is available on Saturdays as well as weekdays. This training will continue to be provided. In addition, we will continue to promote and support these alternative ways to access library services when our buildings are closed, to ensure that users are aware of, and are able to access, the alternative provision that is available.

Although late night library opening hours are not well used by the public, we recognise that there are still some customers who cannot access the library between 10.00am and 5.00pm. The proposals therefore include one evening opening on a Thursday until 6.00pm at those libraries that are currently open later than 5.30pm.

We considered what alternatives there are to reducing library opening hours, but have concluded that we cannot make sufficient savings from the other areas of our overall £2m savings plan. We also considered whether it would be better to propose closing some of our libraries and keeping the others open for longer. We are developing a long-term, strategic view of what needs our library service should meet over the next five to ten years via our Strategic Commissioning Strategy. This is a detailed piece of work that needs to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and not pre-judged. For that reason it will take us around 18 months to complete. Only once this review is complete will we know what the future service could look like and how services should be delivered to best meet need. There are no plans to close libraries during the development of our long term Strategy for the service.

In conclusion, we believe that the proposals we are putting forward to reduce library opening hours as set out in this report will have a minimal impact on library users, and where there is an impact, we have set out clearly how people can access the alternative library services that are available to them. The proposals will enable us to continue to deliver a comprehensive library service. We believe that the proposals are proportionate and fair, both in the contribution that they will make to the overall savings the County Council needs to make, and in the way that we propose to reduce opening hours at each library across the county. We think the proposals will enable us to continue to provide an efficient library service, and to make it more efficient following their implementation, because we will still be able to deliver all services within the new opening hours.

Finalising the impact assessment

This draft impact assessment is based on a detailed analysis of the data we hold about how people use our library services and what they have told us about their library usage from new surveys that we have commissioned of our customers. It forms the preliminary phase of the impact assessment relating to proposed changes to opening hours. We will be undertaking further surveys and more data analysis of library usage, particularly in the evenings, before we finalise it. The analysis will be further informed through a 12-week public consultation, which will seek to gather the views of the wider population on the draft proposals. The results of the public consultation would contribute to our understanding of demand and need for library services in East Sussex and the impact of proposed changes to library opening hours. The impact assessment will be finalised and inform any final decision on library opening hours.